

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7055

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E.O. 11652: NA

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SUBJ: EXCHANGE VISITORS: UPDATING COUNTRY SKILLS LIST

REF: STATE 205206; MANILA 10685

1. ON 14 AUG 74, BLAS F. OPLE, PHILIPPINE SECRETARY OF LABOR, FORWARDED LETTER TO AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN ENCLOSING LIST OF 34 SKILLS CODED AS MOST CRITICAL, CRITICAL, AND LEAST CRITICAL. AN ENCLOSED LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD STATED QUOTE....INsofar AS THE NEEDS OF OUR ECONOMY IS CONCERNED, WE CONSIDER ALL THE AREAS ON THE LIST TO BE CRITICAL... SOME AREAS ARE CONSIDERED MORE CRITICAL THAN OTHERS; HENCE WE HAVE INDICATED PRIORITIES IN RESTRICTING THE OUTFLOW OF TRAINED SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL MANPOWER...UNQUOTE.

FOR QUOTE 2A. GENERAL PRACTICE OF MEDICINE UNQUOTE, CODE FOR CRITICAL WAS INDICATED.

2. FROM FOREGOING, IT IS CLEAR GOP AUTHORITIES CONSIDER GENERAL PRACTICE OF MEDICINE AS CRITICAL TO NEEDS OF PHILIPPINE ECONOMY.

3. EMBASSY DOES NOT AGREE WITH DEPARTMENT'S BASIC PREMISE CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH ONE OF REFTEL AS BASIS FOR REMOVAL OF GENERAL PRACTICE OF MEDICINE FROM SKILLS LIST. PRODUCTION OF MEDICAL DOCTORS BY MEDICAL SCHOOLS DOES NOT RESULT IN OVERSUPPLY OF TRAINED DOCTORS IN ACTUAL PRACTICE. THOUSANDS OF MEDICAL DOCTORS ARE ISSUED IMMIGRANT VISAS (THIRD PREFERENCE)

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AND NONIMMIGRANT VISAS (J-1'S AND AN INCREASING NUMBER OF

H-1'S) EACH YEAR. STILL OTHERS ARE BEING ENTICED TO LEAVE PHILIPPINES TO PRACTICE MEDICINE IN OTHER COUNTRIES. PROBLEM IS EXACERBATED BY MALDISTRIBUTION OF MEDICAL DOCTORS IN PHILIPPINES WITH CONCENTRATION IN URBAN AREAS AND SHORTAGES IN RURAL AREAS. THESE FACTORS AND PERHAPS OTHERS RESULTED IN GOP FINDING THAT GENERAL MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS ARE CONSIDERED CRITICAL TO PHILIPPINE ECONOMY.

4. THE LIBERALIZATION OF SECTION 212(E) IN 1970 HAD EFFECT OF RENDERING TWO YEAR FOREIGN RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT INAPPLICABLE TO MOST MEDICAL DOCTORS BECAUSE THEIR EXCHANGE VISITS WERE PRIVATELY FINANCED. RE-IMPOSITION OF TWO-YEAR REQUIREMENT THROUGH SKILLS LIST IN 1972 HAS AS YET NOT ACHIEVED ANY PRACTICAL RESULTS BECAUSE MEDICAL DOCTORS FROM PHILIPPINES TEND TO STAY FULL FIVE YEARS AS PERMITTED BEFORE RETURNING HOME. THE FIRST RESULTS WILL NOT BEGIN TO BE FELT, THEREFORE, UNTIL 1977.

5. IN CONCLUSION, EMBASSY STRONGLY REQUESTS RETENTION OF BOTH 2A (GENERAL PRACTICE OF MEDICINE) AND 2B (RECOGNIZED MEDICAL SPECIALIZATIONS) ON SKILLS LIST. AS INDICATED IN MANILA'S 10685, 2B WILL HAVE TO BE REVISED IN NEW LIST TO CONFORM WITH JOINT FINDING BY EMBASSY AND GOP OFFICIALS THAT THE SERVICES OF RECOGNIZED MEDICAL SPECIALIZATIONS ARE CLEARLY REQUIRED.
SULLIVAN

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